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Hickory Ridge camp opens, July 22-23, with outdoor events, training

The public is invited to celebrate the successful protection of Hickory Ridge Camp at Lake Red Rock, July 22-23, with a weekend of free outdoor fun and outdoor training.



From Friday afternoon through Saturday evening, the camp project’s partners will host a variety of activities as part of the camp’s official opening and dedication. There will be nature and bird hikes, paddling trainings and tour, a barbecue, campfire and more. A program of dedication and celebration with thanks to donors and volunteers is planned for Saturday at 10:00 a.m. More details on the schedule and plans for the weekend are available at: www.inhf.org/hickoryridge

One of the weekend’s special highlights will be a series of short workshops led by national staff of [Leave No Trace \(www.LNT.org\)](http://www.LNT.org) — a national nonprofit organization that promotes responsible enjoyment and active stewardship of the outdoors. The organization often partners with others, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to get its message to the public and outdoor user groups.

Hickory Ridge is located on a quiet cove south of the Whitebreast Recreation Area, north of Knoxville and west of Pella. The soon-to-be-opened 200-acre public camping area is being created as a place on the lake for enjoyment of nature, with primitive camping available for scouts, paddlers and others. The camp is expected to be a favorite overnight spot on the new 37-mile roundtrip water trail.

In keeping with the primitive aspects of the camp, the opening weekend’s activities will have a casual, roughing-it flavor, with a focus on outdoor fun and learning. This will include designation of a new Lake Red Rock Water Trail, with a paddling tour of scenic sections of the lake where new informative kiosks are being installed. The kiosks will provide information about the lake and its history, user guidelines, water access points, safety tips and wildlife to watch for in the area.

To protect the Hickory Ridge camp, the Red Rock Lake Association teamed up with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, a statewide nonprofit conservation organization, and the federal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The groups coordinated a two-year effort to fund the purchase and restoration of the area, reaching the project goal of \$405,000 this past



winter after receiving a major grant from Prairie Meadows. More than 130 contributors included 32 major donors of over \$1,000. The Iowa DNR's River Programs provided \$33,000 in grant assistance and the water trails conservation crew and local volunteers designed and constructed the landing beach, trails and campsites.

According to Jamie Gyolai, the USACE's Hickory Ridge project leader, "The Corps is glad to be able to help make Hickory Ridge available for public use. We look forward to the dedication as a chance to acknowledge the wonderful support that has made the project possible. We are also excited to be able to have the unique opportunity to offer the Leave No Trace workshops and water trail-related events as part of the weekend."